

Newark

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PRESS RELEASE

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**VAN AUGMENTS TUBERCULOSIS
CONTROL PROJECT IN NEWARK**

NEWARK (March 10, 1988)...A 15 passenger van today became part of a County-wide effort to combat tuberculosis and will be in operation five days a week, according to local health officials.

Newark Mayor Sharpe James joined Callie Foster Struggs, Director of the city's Department of Health and Human Services, and others connected with the Tuberculosis Control Program in announcing the new service.

Mayor James, who inspected the new vehicle in front of City Hall, said he was pleased that the Department had taken another step to reach out to the community to deliver health services. "This is a great idea and I hope that those residents who need help combating this disease will take full advantage of this transportation service."

Struggs noted that in 1985 and 1986, Newark ranked fourth among cities in the nation with populations of more than 250,000 in the number of tuberculosis cases. It also ranked number one in New Jersey.

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There has been a 5.1 percent increase in the number of verified cases since 1986.

In 1987 there were a total of 339 active cases, compared to 309 the year before. Of this number 29 were children, one more than in 1986.

The agency will be using the van to cut down the 37 percent of the patients who do not show up for appointments. These include indigent families, especially those with children, recalcitrant patients who require transportation and those for whom other forms of transportation is unavailable.

The van will also enable teams of staff workers to go into the community to provide therapy.

Struggs explained that in 1975 tuberculosis sanatoriums in New Jersey closed and health officials felt the disease was all but eradicated due to the development of more effective drugs and antibiotics, "Unfortunately, that was not the case," she said, "and we have seen a steady rise in the number of people infected."

The goal of the Tuberculosis Control Program is to lower the incidence of the disease in Newark and Essex County. The project is under the direction of Jeffery Brewster and is operated from the Waymon C. Lattimore Comprehensive Pulmonary Clinic on Bergen Street at University Hospital.

There are two parts of the program; Field Operations, under the direction of the city's Division of Community Health, and Clinical Services, operated by the University of Medicine and Dentistry.

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Field Operations identifies delinquent patients who need follow-up treatment, locates them and makes new appointments, locates people who have had contact with people who have the disease and makes examination appointments for them and contacts private physicians, hospitals and other health agencies for follow-up assistance.

Newark serves as the lead agency in coordinating tuberculosis control activities in Essex County. The local agency processes case reports for Newark and Suburban Essex.

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